

Curious Critters Early Learning Tree

Parent Handbook
2022

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- Table of Contents -

- **Welcome**
- **Registration Process**
- **Tuition and Fees**
- **Attendance, Holidays and Vacation Policy**
- **Weather Related School Closings/Delays**
- **Daily Activities/ Daily Schedules**
- **Curriculum and Learning Activities**
- **Education and Health Accommodations**
- **Birthday and Holiday Celebrations**
- **Field Trips and Special Activities**
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences**
- **Illness, Incident and Boo-Boo Reports**
- **Medication Administering Policy**
- **Emergency and Evacuation Policy**
- **Pick up/Drop Off Procedures**
- **Discipline Policy**

Welcome

Welcome to the Curious Critters Early Learning Tree (CCELT) community.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to care for your child. We take pride in our program and vow to protect, nurture and encourage your little critter. Our mission is to raise the standard of child care in Prince George's County by providing outstanding customer service at affordable rates.

Curious Critters is an ALL-INCLUSIVE educational program. We provide a wide range of amenities to help ease the everyday stress parents experience trying to balance their work & home lives. Our students will enjoy playing in a safe and exciting hands on learning environment.

We look forward to building a strong partnership with your family.

Registration Process

Step 1: Schedule a tour to view our facilities.

Step 2: Print out the enrollment forms found our website,

www.curiouscritterselt.com. Complete the forms and email them along with all supporting documents to admin@curiouscritterselt.com. All documents must be completed in its entirety to enroll. There is a one-time, non-refundable registration fee of \$25.

Step 3: The first week of tuition is due at least one day PRIOR to the start of service. WE DO NOT HOLD/RESERVE SPACE WITHOUT TUITION PAYMENTS.

Tuition and Fees



Tuition is due every Friday by 7:00pm, the prior to the week of service. **There is a late payment fee of \$25 per child / per day until payment is received.** You may not drop off unless full payment with late fees are collected or other arrangements agreed upon. Partial payments are also subject to late payment fees.

Tuition is due each week, unless your child is unenrolled or services are terminated. CCELT reserves the right to refuse payment refunds for any reason.

We accept cash, electronic payments via Bright Wheel & Cash App. Personal checks are also accepted when paying monthly.

UNDERSTANDING LATE TUITION FEES

Tuition is due each Friday by 7:00pm. You may opt to pay as many weeks in advance as you like. However, payments must be made PRIOR to service. If by chance tuition is not paid prior to the service week, please see the following grid for help understanding your late fees. This schedule also applies to late pick up fees.



Friday 7:01pm-11:59pm	Add \$25.00
Saturday 12:00am- 11:59pm	\$25x2= \$50.00
Sunday 12:00am – 11:59pm	\$25x3= \$75.00
Monday 12:00am – 11:59pm	\$25x4= \$100.00

CCELT reserves the right to terminate service at any time for late payment.

In some cases, Curious Critters Early Learning Tree will accept payment arrangements. Failure to adhere to the arrangement will result in termination of service until the full balance (including late fees) has been paid. Payment arrangements are a courtesy, and in no way is CCELT obligated to agree such arrangements.

Electronic Payment Fees:

E-payments made via the **Brightwheel App** are subject to a fee of **.60 cents per ACH transactions (Bank Account) and a 2.9% fee when using a credit card.**

Cash App is still an option, however there is a \$7 fee per transaction.

Late Pick Up Fees:

There is a fee for all students picked up late (after closing). The fee is **\$5 per child, per minute starting at 6:01 pm. The rate increases to \$10/minute as of 6:06pm.** Please contact admin if you anticipate a late pick up, however the late pick up fee is non-negotiable. Late pick up fees are due no later than the next business day at drop off.

Attendance and Holidays

Full time tuition rates are based on 5 days per week at 10 hours per day. Part-time enrollment and reduced tuition rates are not offered. Tuition rates are not adjusted based on your child's absence due to illness, family vacation or any other personal family events. If CCELT is closed (due to inclement weather, power outages, etc.) for 3 or more days within the same week, a credit will be issued for the inconvenience. All emergency closing notifications will be made via the Brightwheel App, automated phone calls and email. Please make sure your contact information is up to date.

CCELT Holiday Closings in 2021:



- Friday, January 1 - **New Year's Day**
- Monday, January 18 - **Martin Luther King, Jr Day**
- Friday, April 2 - **Good Friday Close at 3pm**
- Monday, April 5 - **Easter Monday**
- Monday, May 31 - **Memorial Day**
- Monday, July 5 - **Independence Day (Observed)**
- **NEW!** Monday, August 16th -20th - **Center Wide Family Vacation**
- Monday, September 6 - **Labor Day**
- Thursday, November 11th - **Veteran's Day**
- Wednesday, November 24th **Close at 3pm Thanksgiving Break**
- Thursday, Nov. 25th & Friday, Nov. 26th - **Thanksgiving Break**
- Friday, December 24th - **Christmas (Observed)**
- Friday, December 31st **New Years Day (Observed)**

As a courtesy, please advise admin if you plan to keep your child out for an extended period. **Reminder:** Tuition is still due to hold your space.

Weather Related School Closings and Delays

CCELT will announce school closings, delayed openings and early dismissals via the Brightwheel App, automated phone calls, email blast, text messages and/or our website. Please make sure we have your current contact information. We are not responsible for miscommunications due to change of phone number, full voicemail, etc.

NEW! Family Vacation Policy

Curious Critters Early Learning Tree will close the third week of August 2021 for a school wide “Family Vacation”. We recommend all families plan ahead and schedule your vacation from work or make other childcare arrangements during this time. Based on our School Closing Policy, **we will waive the tuition for the Family Vacation Week.**

<p>Tuition Free the week of August 16th-20th No tuition due on Friday, August 13th</p>
<p>Payments due on August 20th will be applied to the week of August 23rd-27th</p>

Daily Schedules and Activities

Each age group will have their daily routine and scheduled activities posted on the “Parent’s Post”. All students, infants through school age will participate in a variety of language, cognitive, social-emotional and physical development activities daily.

Creative Curriculum and Learning Activities

The Creative Curriculum allows children to learn through hands on exploring and discovery. Therefore, we’ve designed our classrooms to do just that. Our classrooms are specifically designed to make sure your little ones can touch, climb and explore. All activities are planned to promote physical, social-emotional, cognitive and/or language development.

Education and Health Accommodations

Please be sure to share if your child has an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or require any special accommodations. By sharing this information, it will enable our staff to provide your child with the support they need. It is very important to share with CCELT if your child has been screened and diagnosed with any form of disabilities or special health care needs. We want to make sure we are able to provide your little one with the love, care and education they deserve.



Due to COVID-19 , visitors are not allowed in the building. All in person celebrations and special events are cancelled until further notice.

Birthday and Holiday Celebrations

Parents are to contact and coordinate all birthday celebrations with their child's teacher or CCELT Director. Please take into consideration, the class schedule, dietary concerns and age appropriate activities/gifts when planning your child's celebration. The following guidelines are in place to ensure the safety of every child in our care:

- Absolutely NO lit candles
- All cakes/cupcakes, food and drinks must be store bought and sealed prior to being served.
- "Goody Bags" must be distributed by CCELT staff only.
- Cake/cupcakes must be cut and served by CCELT staff ONLY
- PLEASE PROVIDE A LIST OF ALL VISITORS ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR EVENT TO THE CCELT DIRECTOR PRIOR TO THE EVENT. This includes family members, friends, magicians, clowns and other entertainers. ANYONE not on the list will not be admitted into the building. (We can

accommodate a maximum of 10 guests including entertainer for birthday parties).

Holiday celebrations and special events are planned by CCELT staff. Due to limited space, we will issue tickets to each family.



Due to COVID-19 , visitors are not allowed in the building. All in person events and field trips are cancelled until further notice.

Field Trips and Classroom Visitors

CCELT will host theme related field trips and classroom entertainers. These special events will be announced in our 'Curious Fox News' newsletter. All children must have your written permission to participate. All field trips and special activities are included in your child's tuition.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Throughout the school year, we will track and monitor your child's growth and development. At the end of each quarter we will conduct parent-teacher conferences to discuss your child's progress and goals. At this time parents may also address any behavior, academic and developmental concerns. All families are encouraged to attend the conferences. *Due to Covid-19, conferences may be held via Zoom, Skype or Google Meet.

Potty Training and other self-care tasks

At the age of 2 years old, our Cocoon teachers will assist with potty training. It is strongly encouraged that toilet training is also practiced at home as well. Your child's class will be escorted by his teacher (hourly) to one of two restrooms equipped with child sized toilets and sinks. Pull-Up training pants, wipes and other toiletry items are supplied and used to train your child how to care for his/her hygienic needs independently. It is expected that children are fully potty trained before transitioning to the Butterfly Garden (preschool). Your child may be held back in the two's group if they are not fully potty trained by age 3 and you will be charged the 2-year-old tuition rate if pull up training pants are required. Although, we understand the occasional potty accident, preschoolers are expected to be able to communicate the need to use the potty, pull up/down their clothing and clean themselves. In addition, we ask for the parents help in preparing your child for preschool and beyond by training them to feed and dress themselves at home.

Illness, Incident and Boo-Boo Reports

To reduce the spread of germs and viruses, children should not attend school if they are experiencing vomiting, diarrhea, fever, conjunctivitis (pink eye), flu like symptoms, etc. We ask that the child is kept home until they are free from symptoms for at least 24 hrs. We will contact you and/or your emergency contact person if any of these illnesses arise while in our care.

No matter how big or how small, all incidents will be documented and parents will be notified. Small scratches, scrapes and cuts will be cleaned, bandaged and documented by CCELT staff. Larger scratches and wounds will be cleaned, bandaged, documented and parents will be notified. Parents will be called immediately for all head injuries. In the event of a life threatening injury CCELT will contact 911 immediately as well as notifying the parents.

In the event of a bite, you will receive a written incident report. If the bite breaks the skin, parents will receive an incident alert via text or email including picture. Both families involved will receive an incident report.

Medication Administering Policy

All prescriptions and over the counter medications, ointments, lotions, sprays etc **MUST** be accompanied by a medication administration form. A physician's signature is required for ALL prescriptions. The form must be completed in its entirety before CCELT can administer medications. Specific instructions from your doctor such as the dosage, times and dates are required. Only staff members trained to administer medication will do so. All other medications including lotions, ointments, cough drops etc. are NOT permitted on CCELT premises without proper approval and acknowledgement from CCELT administration.

Emergency and Evacuation Policy

CCELT will conduct monthly fire and evacuation drills to ensure all staff and students are well prepared in the event of an emergency. Evacuation plans and emergency contact binders are posted in each class. It is imperative that all parent contact information is up to date.

Drop Off / Pick Up Procedures

Due to Covid-19, parents are required to drop off and pick up at the front entrance. Parents are also required to take their child's temperature with a thermometer from home and show the reading to a CCELT team member before the child can enter the facility.

It is important to keep all emergency contact and alternate pick up information updated, we will not allow your child to leave with anyone not on that list.

We ask that all students 2 years and older arrive by 9:00am for circle time and other morning activities. Arriving by 9am also minimizes class interruptions and allow children a stress free transition from home to school.

Discipline Policy

Curious Critters Early Learning Tree will implement several positive discipline strategies to reduce and resolve undesirable behaviors. In most cases children will have the opportunity to problem solve and communicate amongst each other to find a resolution to their dilemma. In other cases, our teachers and staff will either redirect or offer other alternatives.

If a student becomes frustrated or angry, our staff will calmly communicate with that child. By doing so the student knows his/her concerns are heard and

understood. The teacher will then offer two alternatives to resolve the concern. For example: If a student become upset and does not want to participate for circle time, the teacher will first communicate with the child to make sure he/she is not ill, hungry or tired. The teacher may then offer two choices, the child can sit quietly at a table or the child may choose where he/she would like to sit and participate from a comfortable distance. By offering choices it allows the child to have input into their day.

Redirection is simply a way of distracting or taking their attention away from the source of frustration. If a child is upset during drop off due to separation anxiety, the teacher may try offering the student his/her favorite toy or book. The teacher may also try redirecting the child by singing a song, telling a joke, etc.

The safety of our students and staff is our number one priority. If our teachers are unable to maintain a safe and productive environment, CCELT management will intervene. Immediate pick up may be required and parent conference will be scheduled if needed. We will work as a team to create and implement an action plan in effort to correct any behavioral concerns. In the event we are unable to resolve the issue, we reserve the right to terminate the enrollment agreement.

2021 Tuition Rates & Fees



Registration Fee: \$25 per family	Weekly Tuition Rates
Late Payment Fee: \$25 per day/per child	Infant/Toddler (6 weeks-23 months) - \$360
Late Pick-Up Fee: \$5 per minute, per child starting at 6:01pm	Two Year Old's - \$260
	Preschool (2-5-year old's) - \$230

Effective February 1st, 2021 - We will no longer offer sibling discounts.

We look forward to building a strong partnership with you in providing your little critters with the necessary tools to succeed academically and socially. Our team is dedicated to serving your family and building up our community!

Dominique Walker & Kimberly Bellamy